Promises

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Summary: When Master Chief hears of a reconnaissance mission being sent to Sanghelios, the planet of the elites, he is determined to find the Arbiter. Along this journey, John continues to battle his emotions caused by the loss of Cortana. This story takes place immediately after Halo 4. Rated M for some language and violence.

1. New Beginnings

Promises

When they took off his armor, everything felt different. He had been wearing that armor for over four years now. The last it was changed was when he was back at the Cairo station. Everything was different then...She was still with himâ€¦His thoughts were interrupted by a voice.

Suit Specialist Woman: Master Chief, you are good to go.

Master Chief walked off the suit station. He looked back at his armor. Would he be putting that back on ever again? Then he looked at some Spartans talking.

When did they start the Spartan program back up? These Spartans looked nothing like his fellow Spartans from years ago. Those were the real Spartans. Master Chief began walking past the Spartans. They don't know how it was like for us. They weren't kidnapped or stolen from their families. These Spartans chose to be in this war. We didn't have a choice. Since we were six years old, we were being trained for war. Kelly, me, andâ€¦.Samâ€¦

While John was walking and thinking about his past, he was interrupted once again.

Sarah Palmer: Master Chief, sir!

She saluted him.

Master Chief: What is it?

Sarah Palmer: Captain Lasky wants to speak with you on the bridge.

John nodded and began to proceed to the bridge. Who issued the order for the new Spartan program? Halsey? Halsey! John remembered how Halsey might have been able to fix Cortana. He needed to find her. Master Chief arrived at the bridge and went inside. He was greeted by Lasky.

Lasky: Chief, thank you for coming. The UNSC board of command has heard of your return. And they wish to offer you something.

Master Chief: Like what?

Lasky: They wish honorably relieve you of your duties in the UNSC. You have been in this war for a long time, and they think you should not have to fight anymore.

Master Chief was completely shocked by this. He has been fighting for twenty-six years. How could he just go to a normal life? The only life he had ever known was with the UNSC. Would his parents still be alive? Would they believe that John was cloned and stolen from them? There were so many questions.

Master Chief: Sir, with all due respect, I can still fight.

Lasky: That's why the choice is up to you.

Master Chief: I'm staying.

Lasky nodded and told something to a nearby crew member.

Lasky: They'll receive the word soon, you are free to go.

Master Chief: Sir

Lasky turned back around

Lasky: Yes, Chief?

Master Chief: Where is Doctor Halsey?

Lasky: Chief, Iâ€¦I wish I knew. I only know that the UNSC has her locked up still.

Master Chief: Lord Hood?

Lasky: He's over there.

The captain pointed out the window towards a space station.

Lasky: That's the Cairo station. He's there.

John looked at the station. They must have repaired it from the attack years ago.

Master Chief: I could use a ride.

Lasky: There should be a pelican docked and prepped for takeoff in the hangar. Take it.

Master Chief nodded and left the bridge. He began walking back to the suit station. When he arrived at it, he spoke to the suit specialist.

Master Chief: I'm gonna need this back.

John climbed back on the machine. Then the robotic arms started putting his armor back on. The machine put everything back on except for the helmet which was handed to John. John stared at the helmet. The side of it was cracked from his fight with Didact. All he could think about was Cortana. There's got to be a way to get her back. He still had hope. Then he looked at the back of his helmet. Cortana's chip was still in his helmet. He took it out and looked at it. Her voice echoed through his head.

Don't make a girl a promiseâ€¦if you know you can't keep it.

He clutched onto it in his hand. Then he put on his helmet. John climbed off the machine, and nodded to the suit specialist. John walked over to the nearby hangar. He could hear Spartan Sarah Palmer talking over the intercom.

Sarah Palmer: Alright, Crimson, team Majestic, and Fire team Alpha, we're going to prep for slip space, and then we're gonna send you off once we're back at Requiem.

They're going back? Master Chief walked over to the nearest pelican. Then Palmer stepped in front of him.

Sarah Palmer: What do you think you are doing?

Before John could say anything, a voice came on the com. channel.

Lasky: That'll be alright commander; I authorized the pelican for him.

Sarah Palmer: Apologies, Master Chief.

Master Chief ignored her, and climbed into the pelican. He closed the hatch, and sat down in the seat. He noticed something on the ground. It was a chain for a dog tag. He picked it up, and looked at it. Then he pulled out the chip. He connected the two, and he wrapped it around his hand. There's got to be a way. Then he put his hands on the controls. The pelican's engine roared to life as he started it. The pelican lowered down into the takeoff tunnel. Then he pulled back on the stick at full throttle. With a flash, the pelican shot out of the ship.

2. Lord Hood

Cairo station was about 3 kilometers away. John activated the pelican's thrusters, and it began to fly at incredible speeds. In a

matter of minutes, Master Chief arrived at the station. The place was definitely rebuilt. The hangar door was closed though. Then a voice radioed into John's com.

UNSC officer: UNSC vehicle, please turn around from the station.

Master Chief: Permission to speak to the captain.

There was some noise in the background of the com.

Lord Hood: This is Lord Hood, who am I speaking to?

Master Chief: Sir, this is Spartan 117.

Lord Hood: The hellâ€¦MASTER CHIEF? Marines! Open the hangar!

The hangar door opened, and Master Chief landed inside. He then got out of the pelican. The door opened revealing a group of marines saluting Master Chief.

Marine: Lord Hood is in the bridge.

Master Chief nodded, and walked into the elevator. He hit a button, and the door closed. Then the elevator began to head up. When it arrived at the bridge, it opened showing Lord Hood with a look of disbelief.

Lord Hood: Well, I'll be damnedâ€¦I thought we lost you when the ark was destroyed.

Master Chief: Cortana and I were stranded in space for four years, and we found Requiem. There, we also found the Prometheans and the Didact.

Lord Hood: We heard about him when he attacked Earth, but I had no idea that you were the one that stopped him.

Master Chief: It wasn't just me.

John opened his hand, showing Cortana's chip.

Lord Hood's expression held both shock and sadness.

Master Chief: A.I.'s deteriorate after eight years. We were going to get back here to find Halsey, but she used what she had left of herself to shield me from the explosion of the Composer.

Master Chief gripped onto her chip tightly.

Lord Hood: I'm sorry, John.

Master Chief: What happened? What happened after we destroyed the ark?

Lord Hood breathed.

Lord Hood: We thought we had won. We thought the war was over. The Arbiter went back to his planet, and we assumed you didn't make it. The Arbiter took all of the elites back to Sanghelios, their home

world. Then we started rebuilding, fixing the areas that were glassed on Earth. We built that.

Lord Hood pointed at the Infinity.

Master Chief: When did the Covenant attack again?

Lord Hood: About a year ago. We had made attempts to rebuild Reach. When we got there, we found Covenant ships around it. That's when we realized that we didn't defeat the entirety of them. So, we went lookingâ€¦for a planet, another High Charity, or something to indicate a Covenant home. We still have yet to find it. Then on one of our routines, the Infinity found Requiemâ€¦and you.

Master Chief took in all of this.

Master Chief: At Requiem, I fought Elites. Weren't they against the Covenant rule? Why are they attacking us?

Lord Hood: I don't know, Chief. When we heard of the elites fighting in the Covenant again, we tried to communicate with the Arbiter, Thel Vadaam, but we found it to no avail. The UNSC believes there might be some kind of war going on at their planet. We did not want to make an attempt to go there for fear that one of our vessels may be tracked back to Earth.

Master Chief: If they're at war, then we need to help themâ€¦because they were a big reason for how we won the war.

Lord Hood: Already up for another fight? *Chuckles* We've found a distress beacon from their galaxy, so we'll be sending a recon team soon.

Master Chief: Sir, I wish to go.

Lord Hood: I'll talk to the captain of the ship.

Master Chief: And sir.

Lord Hood: Yes?

Master Chief: Where's Halsey?

Lord Hood: I do not know, Chief. More than likely, she is still locked up somewhere. She's been locked up in the dark for years now. Why do you want to know?

Master Chief's hand opened with Cortana's chip in his palm.

Master Chief: Halsey created her. There might be some way to bring her back.

Lord Hood: Johnâ€¦I don't think-

Master Chief: If there's a wayâ€¦.

Master Chief finished his sentence with a very serious tone.

Master Chief: â€¦you'll be damn sure that I'm gonna find her.

John turned around and looked out of the window. A pelican flew into the Infinity's hangar. Then the Infinity jumped into slip space.

Lord Hood: Now, where are they going?

Master Chief: Back to Requiem.

Lord Hood: Can't get enough of those Prometheans.

Master Chief turned back around to Lord Hood.

Master Chief: When are they leaving for Sanghelios? What ship is it?

Lord Hood: In a couple of days. And it's the ship, The Columbus.

Master Chief: Sir, permission to leave the station.

Lord Hood: Permission granted.

3. The Columbus

Master Chief flew closer to the Columbus. It was definitely smaller than the Infinity, but not by a whole lot. It looked similar to the Forward Unto Dawn. He flew into the hangar. He set the pelican down, and climbed out. He looked at her chip, and then he put it in a side compartment on the right side of his leg, and closed it. He walked over to see multiple Spartans hanging around. Master Chief walked past them without saying a word. A little bit later, John arrived at the bridge. As soon as Master Chief saw the captain, John saluted him.

Captain Storm: At ease, Chief.

Master Chief stopped saluting. The captain was about Lasky's age, maybe a couple years older. He had dark, black hair.

Storm: The name's Riley Storm, but you can call me Storm. I've done my research on you. Destroying the halo, the ark, the Didact, being lost in space, and being the greatest Spartan ever. You are the best of the best.

Master Chief: Thank you, sir.

Storm: And I know about her.

Master Chief didn't say anything.

Storm: And I want to help you try to get her back. I have lost a lot of people I care about as well. Like my wife, Miranda.

Master Chief: Keyes?

Storm: Yes, we promised each other that we'd raise a family one day.

It was obvious that Storm was trying hard not to tear up.

Master Chief: I'm sorryâ€¦What did you mean when you said you'd help me get her back?

Storm: When we're done at Sanghelios, I will help you find Halsey. It's the least I can do for you. I mean you did save the world three times.

Master Chief nodded in thankfulness.

Storm: And one more thingâ€¦I'm sending you with a team of Spartans. Team Poseidon. In fact, there they are now.

Master Chief turned around to see five Spartans behind him.

Storm: This is your new squad leader, Master Chief.

The Spartans saluted Master Chief.

Storm: Introduce yourselves.

The Spartans looked at least twenty years younger than John. The first Spartan all the way to the left had light grey colored armor. His hair was red-ish brown. He spoke first.

Matt: The name's Matt.

Next to him was a female Spartan. She was blonde, and her armor was yellow.

Abby: Mine's Abby.

Next was a guy with dark brown hair. His armor was blood-red.

Trevor: Trevor

Another female Spartan was to the right of him. Her hair was a light brown. Her armor was a lime-colored green.

Sydney: It's Sydney.

The last one was a male Spartan with black hair. He was also the only black Spartan there. His armor was dark blue.

Ross: I'm Ross.

Master Chief surveyed the team. So this was his new squad.

Master Chief: John.

Storm: Now that you all know each other, get ready 'cause we'll be jumping into slip space in five minutes.

The Spartans walked out of the bridge including Master Chief. They walked to a docked pelican in the hangar. Matt turned to the Chief.

Matt: So you're the legendary Master Chief? Who's destroyed the halos? And stopped the Didact? You seem shorter than I

thought.

Master Chief: I've gotten that before.

Abby: So, what's the plan once we get there?

Master Chief: We find the Arbiter, and I'll talk with him. The planet is believed to be at war, so don't shoot ANYTHING unless it tries to engage you. We don't know what exactly is going on. Understood?

The Spartans put on their helmets, and flashed their acknowledgement lights on the sides of their helmets. John had forgotten about the acknowledgment lights. He hadn't seen or used his in a long time. Not since he was with his old squad. The ship then entered slip space. When the ship exited out of slip space, the team of Spartans got inside the pelican. Then a pilot climbed inside with them.

Arctic: I'm your chauffer, Arctic.

He climbed into the pilot seat, closed up the pelican, and flew out of the Columbus. The Spartans looked out of the window of the pelican. There were many Covenant cruisers surrounding the planet.

Storm (Over the com): Activating camouflage.

Then the Columbus vanished out of sight.

4. Sanghelios

Arctic put the Pelican at full throttle towards the planet. Within minutes, the pelican slowed its descent as it entered the atmosphere. As they were flying to the ground, Master Chief caught sight of some explosions and plasma shots going off.

Matt: Looks like there is a war going on.

The pelican flew over to an open patch of grass in a forest.

Arctic: When you give me the word, I'll rendezvous with you here.

The hatch of the pelican opened, and the Spartans climbed out of it. They had their weapons raised at alert. The area appeared clear. The pelican took off back into the sky.

Arctic (Over the com): Happy Hunting.

Trevor: Where to?

Master Chief looked around. The trees were too tall to see over.

Master Chief: There's got to be some kind of head quartersâ€¦ Somewhere where he might be.

Master Chief noticed something behind Sydney. Something that seemed invisible, but moving.

Master Chief: Sydney, MOVE!

Without hesitating, Sydney dove out of the way. Just then, an energy sword swung where she had just been. The Spartans fired at the elite until it fell, dead. Matt then helped Sydney up.

Sydney: Thanks.

Master Chief: Stay alert; there may be more of them.

They moved deeper into the forest. Then they stopped. Storm was trying was trying to contact Chief.

Storm: Master Chief.

Master Chief: Yes, sir?

Storm: I've got a visual of a building ahead of your position. There's a distress beacon going off there. We think it may be the Arbiterâ€¦Sending the coordinates to you now.

The coordinates appeared on the Spartans' HUDs.

Master Chief: I've got 'em.

Storm: I'll keep you updated if I find anything.

Master Chief turned the com off. He looked at the coordinates. The building was only a few clicks ahead.

Master Chief: Let's go.

They began advancing forward even deeper into the forest. When they were close to the end of it, John froze. He held his hand in the air signaling to stop. Nearby, plasma rounds were being fired. Master Chief saw a tan-colored building up ahead.

Master Chief: Ross, check out that building.

Ross pulled out his sniper rifle, and aimed it towards the building.

Ross: There's a fight goin' on there. Two elites in red armor defending the building near the front door. On the ground, there are six more elites, but in blue armor with some jackals and grunts firing at the red elites.

Abby: Elites are fighting each other?

Trevor: Sounds like it.

The elite that had attacked Sydney was in blue armor. So maybeâ€¦

Master Chief: Take down the ones on the ground in blue armor along with the jackals and grunts.

They started running towards the building. Within a minute, they broke out of the forest. They began firing at the grunts, jackals, and blue elites. The Covenant there fell to the ground in a pool a

blood. The elites in red armor pointed their plasma rifles at the Spartans.

Elite: Humans?

Then a Promethean knight appeared in front of Master Chief. In that quick second, John kicked the knight back a few feet. He aimed his assault rifle at it. Before he could fire, an energy sword burst through the knight's chest. The Promethean knight dissolved, and the figure deactivated the energy sword. It walked out of the shadows revealing itself. It was the Arbiter.

5. Were It So Easy

The elites were still aiming their rifles at the Spartans.

Arbiter: That'll be alright, my brothers.

The elites lowered their weapons. The Arbiter stared at John.

Arbiter: Were it so easyâ€¦

Master Chief nodded.

Master Chief: Arbiter.

Arbiter: How are you alive? The Arkâ€¦

Master Chief: When we went through the portal, it collapsed as we were inside. It cut the ship in half.

Arbiter: You were in the back.

There was a sound of a stick snapping in the distance.

Arbiter: It's not safe here, let's go inside.

The Arbiter and the Spartans walked into the building. The Arbiter closed the door behind them, leaving the elites outside on watch. The interior of the building looked like a worn down house. The Arbiter walked over to a wall and a keypad-like-thing popped out. He entered a code, and the wall moved revealing a hidden staircase. They walked down and into the hidden room. It looked like the inside of a covenant ship. The Arbiter walked over to a digital map of Sanghelios.

Arbiter: Had we known you were alive, I would've gone looking for you.

Master Chief: Our half of the ship was sent somewhere in space. I slept in cryogenic sleep for over four years while we were lost. Then we found Requiem and the Prometheans.

Arbiter: We've met.

Master Chief: The Covenant found our ship and boarded us. How are they still banded together? We killed Truth at the Ark.

Arbiter: I have thought the same. When we left your planet, we came back here. The Covenant was still here. Even after the prophets were killed, most of our kind still is with the Covenant. We had tried to stop them, but there weren't enough on our side. The rest are still blinded by the Covenant's lies. We're still at war with them now. The rest of our army is with the shipmaster. It seems impossible for us to win this war.

Master Chief: I think we can fix that. Matt, radio up Storm, and let him know what exactly is going on.

Matt: Roger.

Matt began talking to Storm.

Arbiter: How did you make it back?

Master Chief: One of our ships also crashed on the planet. It's a long story.

Arbiter: What of your construct?

Master Chief: When the Promethean leader, The Didact, found Earth, he tried to annihilate us. The only way we could destroy his weapon was with a nuke. Cortana shielded me from the blastâ€¦But she didn't make it.

Master Chief didn't realize it, but he had her chip in his hand.

Arbiter: I'm sorry

The other Spartans heard this and fell silent. Master Chief put the chip away.

Master Chief: How many of the elites are with you?

Arbiter: A couple thousand, but there a hundreds of thousands of them. Our elites are painted red to know who's on which side.

Master Chief: Come back to Earth with us. It'll be better for you to talk with them about the war for yourself.

Arbiter: I agree, but we need to talk with the shipmaster. He'll want to know that we have help.

Master Chief: I can get us a ride. Arctic, we could use a lift.

Arctic: Copy, sir.

End file.